

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04
SIL-01 AGRE-00 AID-05 FRB-03 XMB-02 OPIC-03 BIB-01
/086 W

-----230656Z 042673 /22

R 221605Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5377
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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NATO FOR ECONAD

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ECON, EEWT, ELAB, UR, US
SUBJECT: BREZHNEV'S TRADE UNION SPEECH: FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC
ECONOMIC POLICY

REF: 76 MOSCOW 16846

SUMMARY: BREZHNEV SAID TRADE AND ECONOMIC TIES WITH THE US
COULD SEE AN "EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT" IF THE US WOULD REMOVE
ITS DISCRIMINATORY BARRIERS AND LET THE 1972 TRADE
AGREEMENT ENTER INTO FORCE. HE CLEARLY SEEMS TO BE SAYING
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THAT "MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS" TRADE CAN STILL DEVELOP DESPITE
OTHER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US. EXCEPT FOR AGRICULTURE (SEE
SEPTTEL), ON THE INTERNAL ECONOMIC SIDE BREZHNEV'S REMARKS
TO THE 16TH CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS GENERALLY WERE A
TIRED RE-HASH OF FAMILIAR PROBLEMS, AIMS, SLOGANS, AND
MEASURES. NEVERTHELESS, THEY PROVIDE A TICK LIST OF THE
PROBLEMS THAT ARE UPPERMOST IN THE LEADERSHIP'S MINDS JUST

NOW. TWO POINTS OF INTEREST WERE: (1) A SLIGHT TILT TOWARD STRENGTHENING LABOR DISCIPLINE AND CRITICISM AS THE MEANS TOWARD BETTER PERFORMANCE, AND (2) THE HINT OF CONTINUING RESISTANCE TO PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT AND THE STATEMENT THAT SPECIFIC PROPOSALS WILL, NONETHELESS, SOON BE FORTHCOMING. END SUMMARY.

1. ON THE FOREIGN ECONOMIC SIDE, BREZHNEV GAVE PROMINENT PLACE TO THE "EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS" TRADE AND ECONOMIC TIES WITH THE US AS BEING AMONG FOUR "QUITE ATTAINABLE TASKS" FOR OUR TWO COUNTRIES. (THE OTHERS WERE ARMS CONTROL MEASURES AND PEACE EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, SEE SEPTELS FOR DETAILS). HE SAID SUCH TIES COULD BE DEVELOPED ON THE BASIS OF REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATORY BARRIERS CREATED BY THE US (READ: MFN AND EXIM CREDITS) AND THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF AGREEMENTS ON THESE QUESTIONS SIGNED LONG AGO (I.E., THE 1972 TRADE AGREEMENT). IN SAYING THESE THINGS BREZHNEV WAS REITERATING A THEME HE HAD VOICED ON NOVEMBER 30, 1976, TO THE US-USSR TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL AND SIGNALLING AGAIN THAT THE SOVIETS STILL VIEW TRADE AS AN AREA WHERE WE CAN BOTH BENEFIT EVEN WHILE DIFFERENCES EXIST IN OTHER FIELDS.

2. AFTER REITERATING THAT EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY ARE THE KEY PROBLEMS OF THE TENTH FYP, BREZHNEV SPOKE OF THE PROBLEM OF IMPROVING ECONOMIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT. HE NOTED THAT "A GREAT AMOUNT OF WORK" IS BEING DONE IN THIS FIELD AND "SPECIFIC PROPOSALS" ARE BEING PREPARED BY CENTRAL PLANNING AND ECONOMIC BODIES. THE URGENCY OF THIS TASK - AND PERHAPS THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF RESISTENCE TO IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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(REF A PARA 13) - WAS CONVEYED IN HIS SAYING, "THERE MUST BE NO DELAY IN THIS WORK: IT IS REGARDED AS VERY IMPORTANT BY THE PARTY."

3. HAVING THUS DISPOSED OF THE PROBLEM OF GOOD MANAGEMENT "FROM ABOVE" HE TURNED TO "ONE MORE POWERFUL FORCE FOR SPEEDING UP ECONOMIC GROWTH"--THE CREATIVE ACTIVITY, INITIATIVE AND LABOR ENTHUSIASM "FROM BELOW." BREZHNEV TALKED UP SOCIALIST EMULATION AND THE "POLITICAL OBJECTIVE" OF DEVELOPING A COMMUNIST ATTITUDE TOWARD WORK AS IMPORTANT MEANS TO THESE ENDS. BUT WHAT HE REALLY STRESSED WAS THE NEED TO AVOID FORMALISM AND EYE-WASH IN THESE CAMPAIGNS AND THE "VERY IMPORTANT" ROLE OF THE TRADE UNIONS IN STRENGTHENING LABOR DISCIPLINE. WHAT GIVES URGENCY TO THIS QUESTION IS NOT THAT DISCIPLINE HAS GROWN WORSE - "ON THE WHOLE" IT HAS NOT, HE CLAIMED - BUT RATHER THE NEW DEMANDS OF NEW TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF BRANCHES AND INDUSTRIES IN A MODERN ECONOMY. WHATEVER THE CAUSE, DISCIPLINE CLEARLY REMAINS A PROBLEM, BECAUSE ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO SPOIL THE MOOD OF THE CONGRESS, BREZHNEV FELT

"COMPELLED" TO SAY THAT THE TRADE UNIONS ARE "NOT FIGHTING
VIGOROUSLY ENOUGH AGAINST WORKING-TIME LOSSES." TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, POLICIES, LABOR UNIONS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 22-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW03798
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770099-0098
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770335/aaaabehw.tel
Line Count: 118
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: efea34b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MOSCOW 16846
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3036177
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BREZHNEV'S TRADE UNION SPEECH: FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICY
TAGS: ECON, EEW, ELAB, UR, US, (BREZHNEV, LENOID I)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/efea34b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009